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UNCLAS ISTANBUL 000118

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TURKISH HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP REQUESTS GUANTANAMO  
DETAINEE INFO

1. (U) On January 21, Poloff met with Ahmet Mercan, Istanbul Chairman of Islamically-oriented Turkish human rights group Mazlum-Der (Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People). Mazlum-Der provided Poloff with a letter dated January 13, 2003, requesting information on a Turkish citizen they believe to be a detainee at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, Murat Kurnaz.

2. (U) In its letter, Mazlum-Der asked the following specific questions:

-for what reason is Kurnaz in custody and what is his status?

-More than 12 months have passed since Kurnaz was taken into custody. If he is going to be brought before a court in your country, according to which international treaty will this be done?

-In the 12 months Kurnaz has been detained, has he been questioned by a judge? Does he have the right to fair trial? What are the grounds for this?

3. (U) Mercan also verbally requested information on which international or non-governmental organizations have been to Guantanamo to observe the prisoners and their conditions. Mercan said that he also requests that a group of Turkish human rights advocates be allowed to visit the prisoners at Guantanamo. He said that Mazlum-Der would be glad to participate, but would be happy if any group was able to go.  
ARNETT